

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH APPLICATION

The application for approval of this research project was submitted to the appropriate committee at the Graduate School of Education at Boston College, and included the following pieces (whose text is reproduced in their entirety, although their format is reduced in size for the purposes of these appendices): written answers to the standard questions the committee posed, the workshop application form, the research consent form, the participant acceptance letter, the dissertation project summary, a description of data collection methods, and the outreach ad to be used to recruit for the project.

Committee Approval Form

1. Title of Project: "The social construction of knowledge, popular media, and the creation of border communities in religious education"
2. Principal Investigator: Mary E. Hess
3. Collaborators in Outside Institutions: none
4. General statement of the problem and research question to be tested by the proposed research:

Contemporary religious communities are largely supplanted and surrounded by mass-mediated popular culture. This study will explore how religious educators engage, critique and utilize popular media, through a six session workshop that will provide both a support network for religious educators doing media literacy work, and a context for critically reflecting upon their own processes of developing media literacy.

5. Description of the overall plan and procedures and methods.

Participants will be recruited through a variety of networks (see #6 below). They will meet together every other week from mid-January through early May. Early meetings will center around discussion of "Catholic Connections to Media Literacy" a nationally sponsored and distributed media literacy curriculum package that these educators have been (or will shortly be) using in their educational settings. Later meetings will provide a venue for support of these educators as they pursue media literacy, and will explore any concerns, conflicts and issues that arise. These workshop sessions will be audio-taped for later transcription and analysis by the investigator. In addition, each participant will be interviewed by the investigator at the close of the workshop.

6. Relevant characteristics and source of participants. Describe how participants will be recruited.

The primary characteristic sought in participants is experience as a religious educator. They do not have to be professionally employed, but they do have to be involved in explicit religious education. Participants will be recruited through at least the following sources: the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College, the Boston Theological Institute, the Boston Catholic Schools Office, the Catholic School Leadership Program, and through various professors that teach media literacy in the greater Boston area (Renee Hobbs, Hugh Jessup, and so on).

7. Describe how participants will be selected for participation in this project and any remuneration to be received by the subject.

Participants will be recruited through the sources listed above. They will be asked to fill out a short application form (see attached forms). All who apply and who agree to consistent attendance at the workshop meetings will be invited to participate, up to a maximum of twelve people. If more people than that are interested, then participants will be chosen by the investigator so as to provide maximum diversity (in teaching context, in denominational commitment, in age, and so on) amongst workshop members.

8. Status and qualifications of research assistants, if any: N/A
9. Source of funding for project: At the moment there is no funding, although the investigator has applied for dissertation fellowship support. The IREPM at Boston College has agreed to provide space and equipment for the workshop sessions.
10. Expected starting and completion dates for project: The workshops will run from mid-January through early May of 1996. After the investigator has completed preliminary analysis of workshop transcripts, participants will be invited back to dialogue about that analysis. The dissertation is expected to be finished in June of 1997.
11. Outline potential benefit of this project to the individual participant, group of participants, or society in general.

Individual participants will receive the benefits of an ongoing support network of religious educators doing media literacy. Longer-term benefits may include the

development of a strong argument for including media literacy work in religious education, and identification of further avenues for research in this area.

12. Outline potential risks to participants and the measures that will be taken to minimize such risks.

There are no potential risks foreseen in this process.

13. Specify procedures developed with respect to the anonymity of participants and the confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying indicators will be kept on subjects. Specify procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information.

Should participants so request (and they will be invited to do so at the beginning of the workshop, and at subsequent times), their identities will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and other disguising additions to the workshop transcripts (and any analysis that arises from them). Only the investigator will have the means of connecting actual participants to their pseudonyms. Any excerpts from workshop transcripts will maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality as workshop members desire. Workshop audiotapes will remain in the possession of the investigator, and will not be turned over to any other person or institution.

14. Specify how subjects will be informed of the following:
 - a) the nature of their participation in the project: through initial outreach announcements, through a letter accompanying their acceptance into the project, through their signing of a consent form, and through an initial orientation at the first workshop session (see enclosed forms attached to this application)
 - b) that their participation is voluntary: through the consent form
 - c) that their responses are confidential: through the consent form and the letter of acceptance
15. Specify any special populations involved in this project and describe the procedures for obtaining the appropriate consent: N/A
16. If the subjects are to be drawn from an institution or organization which has the responsibility for the participants, then documentation of permission from the institution must be submitted to the Committee before final approval can be given. N/A
17. Specify the institutional ethical review procedures to which the application will be subjected: the dissertation committee, and the Human Subjects Review Committee of the School of Education at Boston College
18. Researchers normally offer to provide some summary of findings to participants. Describe any plan for doing so, or a rationale for why this is not tenable.

As previously noted, there will be many opportunities for participants to review the investigator's analysis. Since this is a participatory research project, workshop

members will themselves be central to the ongoing research effort. A final research report will be available to all project participants.

Research Application Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number (day) _____ (eve/wkend) _____

E-mail address _____

In what settings, and with what groups, do you work as a religious educator?

What is your primary community of faith?

Do you have a denominational affiliation? If so, what is it?

What, if any, electronic media equipment do you use regularly?

Do you have any background in media literacy work? If yes, please describe it.

What do you expect out of this workshop?

What do you hope might happen in this workshop?

Please fill out the table below, circling and numbering your first, second, and third choice preferences for workshop meeting times. If you will need any special accommodations to participate, please indicate those as well.

Monday	3:30-5:30pm	6:00-8:00pm
Tuesday	8:00-10:00 am	
Wednesday	3:30-5:30pm	6:00-8:00pm
Thursday	3:30-5:30pm	6:00-8:00pm
Friday	3:30-5:30pm	
Saturday	9:00-11:00am	1:00-3:00pm

Are there days/times that would work for you on an alternating basis? Or are there other days/times or ways of arranging the workshop that would make it possible for you to attend? Please describe any additional preferences here.

Research Consent form

By my signature below, I agree to participate in “Media Literacy and Religious Education,” a six session workshop facilitated by Mary Hess as part of her dissertation research, under the supervision of Dr. Mary Boys, Dr. Brinton Lykes and Dr. John McDargh. The workshop will be held at the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College.

In agreeing to this participation, I understand the following:

1. All workshop sessions will be audio-taped, and Mary Hess has my permission to use information gathered from those sessions as data in her research, as well as for other educational purposes.
2. If I so request, my confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the disguising of identifying characteristics in any reports.
3. As they request, I will protect the confidentiality of other participants in the workshop.
4. I will take part in an interview following the completion of the workshop sessions, which will be taped and transcribed for research purposes. I will be able to review the transcription, and make any clarifications or changes I deem necessary.
5. There will be opportunities to review written transcripts of the workshop sessions, as well as Ms. Hess’ conclusions about the research process, and to engage in dialogue about those conclusions.
6. I can receive a copy of any research report generated as a result of this workshop.
7. I am always free to end my participation at any time.

Date: _____ Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____ Signature of researcher: _____

Acceptance Letter

Dear (participant),

I would like to welcome you into the “Media Literacy and Religious Education” workshop. I am very excited by the energy and enthusiasm of the group of people who have decided to join together in this research project. We each come from different places, and with differing concerns, but what we share is a common commitment to religious education and to engaging popular media constructively within religious education.

It is my hope that this workshop will be a supportive space in which we can explore together both the specific curriculum “Catholic Connections to Media Literacy,” as well as any issues and concerns that arise as we seek to implement media literacy within our varied contexts. This research project is specifically designed to be participatory — your interests, your concerns, and your energy are central to its success.

The orientation meeting of the workshop will be on (date) at (time) at the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College.

The workshop will then meet six times on the following dates:

(include dates and times here)

Directions to the Institute, and suggestions for parking are attached to this letter.

I have also enclosed a research consent form. As you know, this research is being undertaken as part of my dissertation project in the department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. Such research is governed by strict guidelines, so it is crucial that you read this form carefully before signing it. Please bring it with you to our first meeting. If you have any questions, you can contact me (Mary Hess) at 617-983-1830.

It is important to this project that workshop members attend as consistently as possible. If you will not be able to attend a session, please try to call me in advance.

It is also important that we respect each other’s right to anonymity and confidentiality. If you would like me to protect your identity through the use of a pseudonym, and by disguising any identifying characteristics in any reports I generate, please let me know. Please respect any request on the part of other workshop members to protect their anonymity and confidentiality as well.

I am looking forward to our first meeting. If you have any questions before then, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Hess

Brief Summary of Dissertation Proposal

Those who are actively pushing the leading edges of communications technology shifts within United States culture are convinced that in the decades to come, context will be everything. Paul Saffo writes in *Wired* magazine (March 1994, pp. 74-75):

It is not content but context that will matter most a decade or so from now. The scarce resource will not be stuff, but point of view... The future belongs to neither the conduit or the content players but those who control the filtering, searching, and sense-making tools we will rely on to navigate through the expanses of cyberspace.... In a world of hyperabundant content, point of view will become the scarcest of resources.

One of the primary ways human beings have provided context for ourselves is by the telling of stories, and the embodying of our most central stories in ritual. In the United States much of that embodiment has been religious. At this point in U.S. history, however, the ability of religious communities to provide such context is in serious question. Such communities, and the narratives and rituals they offer, are generally not the producers and purveyors of the most-repeated stories of popular culture. It was not primarily religious communities who brought to mass attention the images and narratives of the O.J. Simpson trial, to offer one contemporary example. Rather, it was mass media, particularly television, that carried the sound bites and images, the dichotomized and superficial commentaries that so pervaded our national consciousness during this past year.

It is not that religious communities have no perspectives to offer on such a case. The themes and issues they raise, however, have much less to do with the guilt or innocence of this particular man, and much more to do with underlying and systemic problems in contemporary society. The complexity of such issues is not easily conveyed in sixty minute packages (let alone thirty second sound bites). In addition to the production problems entailed in fitting such discussions into the forms typically found on television, deep discussion of these issues provokes criticism of the very institutions that fund and control the mass media.

Increasingly, religious communities are finding themselves in the position of being “counter-cultural” in relation to mass-mediated popular culture. Consider, for example, how human sexuality is generally portrayed on television, versus the teachings of contemporary Roman Catholicism. Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with the magisterial teachings, a wider and deeper discussion is to be had within the Catholic community than is present within mass-mediated popular texts. Similarly, the range of views available with respect to economic justice is quite narrow within mass-mediated popular culture, and is for the most part absent of any underlying link to a foundational morality. Yet most Roman Catholics, to stay with this example (but not to imply that it is only true in that religious community) get their information from the mass media, and are deeply shaped by its dynamics. Only a minority read Catholic newspapers frequently, or regularly attend daily services.

The dilemmas facing religious communities include not simply issues of perspective with regard to public policy, but even more fundamental issues of religious identity. Cultural critics, particularly those working within the framework of “cultural studies,” have eloquently described the extent of commodification that U.S. culture has

undergone. Popular definitions of “self” in this consumer society have much more to do with one’s ability to purchase commodities, than they do with essential relationality with all other human persons, let alone with a transcendent God. It is not coincidence that mass-mediated news trivializes the rich and dynamic discussions over authority in the U.S. Catholic church as a conflict about “cafeteria Catholicism,” for that is a metaphor that frames the debate within consumerist terminology.

Religious educators seeking to deepen religious identity and nurture authentic religious community must seek to understand how mass-mediated popular culture’s images, narratives, and institutions already shape and contextualize religious communities, long before persons enter into formal programs of religious education. At the same time, we need to find ways to use the technologies of mass media (television, radio, film, computer networks, and so on) to share the deep and compelling stories and images that shape our faith communities with the larger cultures we exist within. The position I am taking here is quite different from that of more fundamentalist Christian religious educators who approach mass media from a dichotomized epistemological frame, and thus carve sharp distinctions between “secular” mass media and “religious” mass media. Instead I am arguing that religious educators need to examine the ways in which mass popular media elicit our desires and may then attach them to “false idols.” From this perspective we can consider the ways in which communications technologies can be used to subvert and contest such false idols. We can also begin to provide alternative interpretations and media products that share the rich resources of our faith communities. The strong metaphor that is useful here is of the creation of “border communities” and the process of “border crossing,” where the “border” involved requires movement in and out of mass popular culture to and from religious community. Engaging media literacy in this way suggests myriad avenues for helping people form religious identity that is deeply loyal, but open in the midst of our highly complex, fluid and in many ways chaotic cultures.

At the heart of this study, then, lie questions of how we might learn to use our religious experiences — in both their personal and social dimensions — to critique our embeddedness in mass-mediated popular culture. The reciprocal questions are also important: how might critical engagement with mass-mediated popular culture texts help us to understand and nourish our religious experiences and religious communities? These are questions that have important epistemological underpinnings: what do we mean when we say we “know” something, what “counts” as knowledge in contemporary U.S. culture, how do the contexts we inhabit and our developmental processes affect our ways of knowing, and what impact does or should such knowing have on our actions?

Research Data Collection

This study uses a qualitative participatory research methodology to try to get at these questions. In using such a methodology this study does not argue that its findings are in any way generalizable beyond the group involved, but it does seek to describe as carefully and contextually as possible, one group's response to efforts to integrate religious education and media literacy.

A specific curriculum developed by the Center for Media Literacy, and supported by a group of national Catholic organizations (including the National Catholic Education Association, and the Catholic Communication Campaign) will be explored by a group of religious educators. Entitled "Catholic Connections to Media Literacy," this curriculum seeks to teach students how to "de-construct" popular culture in light of Catholic values, and then "re-construct" transformative media products.

A six session workshop making this curriculum available to religious educators, examining its utility and implementation, and exploring any broader issues that arise around media literacy work in religious education will be provided by this researcher through the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. The workshop will be free of charge and open to religious educators in the greater Boston area. Requirements for participation will include completing the application forms (which include a specific consent form), consistent participation in the workshop sessions, and an interview with this researcher at the close of the process. The workshop sessions will be audiotaped for later transcription, and I will use the transcripts as the basis from which to deepen and broaden my analysis of the workshop process. Workshop participants will have access both to these transcripts and to any analysis I produce. In addition to the collaborative nature of the workshop, there will be opportunities for participants to continue, after the workshop is over, to dialogue about any analysis I propose.

The questions I bring to the workshop are the following:

What kinds of questions, conflicts, alternatives, and resistances arise in trying to do media literacy work within religious education? Can or do religious educators perceive their work as oriented to cultural agency? In what ways have popular media impinged on the teaching practices of these educators to date? In what ways are religious perspectives useful with relation to popular media? In what ways do the questions of media literacy inform our (that is, religious educators) understandings of our work?

Given the participatory nature of this project, many more questions will be developed by participants, as will the priority with which different questions are addressed. Although I will plan and structure the initial meetings of the workshop, subsequent meetings may well be planned by workshop participants.

Outreach Announcement

Media Literacy and Religious Education Research Project Seeks Participants

Do your students know more about what's on television than you do? Have you struggled to find a way to make scripture, theology, and ethics relevant to persons steeped in an electronically-mediated culture? Are you interested in religious approaches to media literacy?

Mary Hess, a doctoral candidate in religious education at Boston College, is seeking religious educators from the greater Boston area who are interested in being part of a participatory research project. She will be facilitating a six session workshop on religious approaches to media literacy through the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College.

The workshop will meet for two hours roughly every two weeks from mid- January through early-May on a schedule that will be largely determined by workshop members. Catholic Connections to Media Literacy, a curriculum developed by the Center for Media Literacy with the support of the National Catholic Educators Association and the Catholic Communications Campaign will be the jumping off point for an ongoing discussion that will explore constructive ways to use popular media in religious education.

All religious educators (whether volunteer or professional, Catholic or from other faith communities) are welcome to apply to participate, and there will be no charge for the workshop. If more people apply than can be accommodated, participants will be chosen to ensure that workshop membership spans as wide a variety of religious educators as is feasible.

For an information packet with details about the research project, and application forms, please call Mary Hess at 617-983-1830, or send e-mail to: hessma@bcvms.bc.edu,

APPENDIX B

WORKSHOP AGENDAS

These pages were handed out at the beginning of each workshop.

10 February 1996: Orientation

Agenda:

Coffee, juice, munchies

Opening space/moment of reflection

Welcome! (and some basic ground rules)

Introductions (3-5 minutes each)

My expectations

- what is “participatory action research”?
- what will we do here? (including some tasks each week that could be me, could be you, could be us, etc. — facilitator; sharer of resources [bibliographies, prepared presentation/ reflection], coordinator of logistics [equipment, supplies, etc.]
- topics we could cover
 - what is media literacy?:
 - Catholic Connections to Media Literacy (in-depth analysis)
 - other media literacy projects/resources
 - techniques of various kinds of media: television, films, radio, the internet, popular print
 - specific topics that cross various forms/genres of media: race, class, gender/sex, “value” issues, how is religion/religiousness represented?
 - issues in religious education and media literacy: transformative religious education using popular media; epistemological transformations; teaching resources; theology and media; religion, media, culture

Your expectations

Our expectations

Logistics (dates/times)

Closing space/reflection

Attached handouts:

- *Forming Values in the Media Age: A Sourcebook for Media Literacy Education in Catholic Schools and Parishes*, published by the Center for Media and Values in collaboration with the National Catholic Education Association (permission to reproduce given subsequent to paying royalties to the Center for Media Literacy)
- a workshop participant list with names, addresses and phone numbers

28 February 1996: Television commercials

Agenda:

Welcome back!

Round of “check-ins”

Introduction to this evening

Awareness:

divide into groups (view video or share magazine ads)

Analysis:

come back together, share insights

4 principles of media literacy

Pastoral reflection:

definitions of spirituality and religious education

scripture passage — Jeremiah 31:33

Action:

keep a media log, collect print ads

what is advertising telling us about ourselves? about our relationships? about our spirituality?

which types of products tend to use more “religious” images?

how do we buy products we need without “buying into” the myths of image culture?

Topic/dates for upcoming sessions:

Closing: Joan Osborne’s “One of Us”

Handouts:

- “four principles of media literacy” (from CCML kit)
- “myths of the image culture” (from CCML kit)
- a sheet with various definitions of spirituality and religious education
- the words to the hymn “Deep Within”
- a schedule with the dates and topics of future sessions
- a brief bibliography of media literacy resources

13 March 1996: WWW

Agenda:

Reflection/Opening/Welcome back

Round of “check-ins”

Introduction to this evening

Awareness:

part one:
introduction to the World Wide Web

part two:
surfing the Web

Analysis:

what kind of “frame” does the Web provide for us?
who wins? who loses? who’s in? who’s out?

Pastoral reflection:

how does/should the internet “matter” in religious education?
how does the physical practice of using the Internet/Web inform our spirituality?
what kind of stance should media-literate religious educators take in regard to this technology?

Action:

questions to reflect on this week:
what does the Internet/the Web contribute to religious education? to spirituality?
what does it take away?
how do we find the information we need without succumbing to the prevailing “frame”?

Announcements/find date for news workshop

Closing: Nancy Griffith’s “Time of Inconvenience”

Handouts:

- brief bibliography on educational issues raised by the Internet

20 March 1996: Film

Agenda:

Reflection/Opening/Welcome back

Round of “check-ins”

Introduction to this evening (which was planned and facilitated by a member of the group)

Viewing of an excerpt from the documentary *A Thin Blue Line*

Discussion

Closing: Mary Chapin Carpenter’s “Dead Man Walking”

Handout:

- a sheet of discussion questions and information on the film *Dead Man Walking*, prepared by the workshop participant who planned the session

(This handout was prepared by David for our workshop.)

Dead Man Walking

Director/Screenwriter:

Tim Robbins

Principal Characters:

Sister Helen Prejean (Prayzhon)

Matthew Poncelet (Prisoner)

Hilton Barber (sp?) (Attorney)

Walter Delacroix (murdered boy)

Hope Percey (murdered girl)

Mr. & Mrs. Percy

Mr. & Mrs. Delacroix

Vocalists:

? Annabi

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan

? Limanski

Bruce Springsteen

Eddie Vedder

Questions:

1. What theme was the strongest for you? How has the film had most impact on your thinking?
2. What brought Matthew Poncelet around to face the truth about himself?
3. What did you think about the on-screen portrayal of violence in the film? Was it necessary? Too much? Too little?
4. Did you think Sister Helen's effectiveness was influenced by the fact that she is a woman?
5. How do you respond to the statement by Clyde Percey — father of the murdered girl — that "Matthew Poncelet is God's mistake"?
6. Most good films draw the viewer into a space that colors his/her perspective, ie. good films have a point of view. Some would say films are manipulative. Did this film manipulate the audience? You?
7. Who should determine/decide about public policy and law — eg. the death penalty — those who have been directly affected by an issue, or others who understand it intellectually by can discuss it at arm's length?
8. What styles and techniques did you notice in the film? What did you think worked or didn't work? Which do you think were good or bad?

27 March 1996: News

Agenda:

Reflection/Opening/Welcome back

Round of “check-ins”

Introduction to this evening

Awareness:

how do we define “news” in our own lives? what kinds of “news” do we look for, use, avoid, ignore, and so on?

view video segments
divide into groups to discuss

Analysis:

come back together, share insights from group process

Pastoral reflection:

how does/should news “matter” in religious education?
are there “principles” of religious media literacy? or of media-literate religious practice?

Action:

questions to reflect on this week:
what is the news telling us about ourselves? about our relationships? about our spirituality?
what qualifies as “religious news”?
how do we find the information we need without succumbing to the prevailing “frame”?

Closing: Tracy Chapman’s “All That You Have is Your Soul”

Handouts:

- a brief bibliography of resources on “reading” the news

1 May 1996: Music video

Agenda:

Welcome!

Touch Base with each other

When religious imagery and symbols come into popular culture...

an encounter with a music video

Small group discussions in trios (get a recorder!)

Large group discussion: insights from trios

Closure and next steps

interview process
transcript review process
analysis of workshop process

Next steps for the group

Closing reflection

APPENDIX C

EXIT INTERVIEW

Areas to cover:

Demographics (age, race/ethnicity/community, marital status, religious commitment)

Workshop evaluation in general: what worked, what didn't work, what you most remember

Ask about reactions to, learnings from, each session:

Intro/orientation, television commercials, the internet, film (Dead Man Walking), television newscast, Madonna's "Like a Prayer"

What worked? ...for example:

breaking into groups? seeing things several times?

seeing the film between times?

what did you think about the songs we began and ended with?

what about the written materials? especially from the Center for Media Literacy?

What didn't work?

What do you wish we'd done that we didn't do?

What would you like to do in the future?

What about power issues? did they impact you at all? did you ever feel silenced in the workshop?

What about race/gender/class issues?

How, if at all, did this process affect your own practices? (whether explicitly religious, or educational)

How do you think media literacy interacts with religious education? if at all?

How does it connect to social justice, if at all? (for example, did we engage in “action” in any way?)

Finally (information on how to stay in touch, perspectives on use of your name in the transcript -- assume not, unless otherwise stated, anything else you'd like to add)

APPENDIX D

23 OCTOBER 1996: WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

What follows is my initial take on what I think I have learned — and in many ways, what we have learned — through this very dialogical, collaborative process. I hope that it will spark a conversation tonight that will keep us going!

In theoretical terms...

- the small group principles from Vella, et. al. work
the general theory is that adult learning takes place in dialogue: dialogue between the learner and the materials, between different learners, between a learner and a teacher (facilitator); her specific principles are as follows:
 1. needs assessment: “learners need to participate in naming what is to be learned” (she cites Hutchinson’s “www” : *who* needed *what* as defined by *whom*)
[I tried to do this both through the application process, on an ongoing basis in the workshop itself, and through the interviews]
 2. safety: people need safe environments in which to trust, to be vulnerable, to be open to learning
[I tried to do this in a variety of ways: the structure of the workshop, the confidentiality agreement, the consent form, using dyads and quartets, by broaching issues of conflict and power early on]
 3. sound relationship: “friendship, but no dependency, fun without trivialization of learning, dialogue between men and women who consider themselves peers”
[I tried to do this through the long introductions at the first session, the “check-in” time at each session, through encouraging people to present and to bring their own materials for us to use, and through the use of dyads and quartets; I also think the material contributed to the fun!]
 4. sequence and reinforcement: “sequence means begin at the beginning: move from small to big, slow to fast, easy to hard” — which sometimes take a while to figure out!
[I tried to do this by having us all begin with the curriculum workbook as a starting text, and then moving on from there; my sequence got a little out of whack when due to the snow we had to move the news session out of the order I’d planned]
 5. action with reflection: *praxis*!
[I tried to make the whole workshop be about this, but I think whether or not we succeeded depends on how you define “action”]

6. learners as subjects of their own learning: her “four open questions: what do you see happening here? why do you think it is happening? when it happens in your life, what problems does it cause? and what do you think you can do about it?” are moving in the same direction as the pastoral circle of “awareness, analysis, reflection, action”
[This process was built into the curriculum kit and certainly into the agendas I planned each week, but we very rarely explicitly used religious reflection, and as I mentioned earlier, whether or not “action” was involved depends on how you define it]
 7. learning with ideas, feelings, and actions: integrating all three ways of learning into a learning activity
[I tended to rely on the small group structure as the primary way to make this happen, as well as on the artistry involved in various media]
 8. immediacy, or teaching what is really useful
[did we do this? people seemed to think so, although several people mentioned they’d like more “hands-on” ideas for classroom use]
 9. assuming new roles for dialogue: “the death of the ‘professor’”
[I tried to be a facilitator, not a professor]
 10. teamwork: people learn together
[I really think this principle was a key to what happened in this workshop!]
 11. engagement: people learn when they want to learn, and are actively invited into the process!
[see all of the above]
 12. accountability: success in the eyes of the learner
[Tonight’s discussion is one part of assessing whether or not we had success, as were the interviews.]
- Kegan’s work on meaning frameworks is very helpful in describing various perspectives from which people approach media, and in suggesting questions to pose
media literacy pretty much requires what he terms an “institutional” order of consciousness, as does religious ed in a pluralistic context
 - it’s a good example of “participatory action research”
it was definitely participatory, and everybody spoke about the level of energy it generated for them

Jane Vella suggests that “political action is rarely the direction result of education; education can lead to transformation of those who will then transform society through political action” -- in this case I think “action” means consciousness-raising about media issues (the heart of media literacy), and it also meant that the ideas returned again and again either in people’s daily lives (consciousness issues) or in their work

although we did not focus on them, we also did not ignore issues of race, class, and gender; I think we could do more on systemic, structural, economic issues (who owns the media, how ownership impacts on content, etc.)

In practical terms...

- what is media literacy? what are the important questions?
who wins, who loses? who's up, who's down?
what is pleasurable about this?
what hungers does this respond to?
and then, is there some deeper pleasure, some more profound hunger to be satisfied by religious community -- how do religious educators make that clear to people?
... in examples like "One of Us" we talked about incarnation and theological anthropology; in "Like a Prayer" we talkd about justice, marginalization, erotic energy; the Diet Coke commercial was a good example of trying to respond to our hunger but giving very unsatisfying, even destructive, answers
... the process of taking time to look and look again at a specific text, in dialogue with others, is a crucial part of the process
... the skill of looking at pop culture critically is a crucial part of resisting its negative messages, hence a crucial part of developing a religious identity (can't form such an identity without developing a resistance, a contesting frame)
- using popular culture within a media literacy frame is useful in religious ed because:
... it points out the socially constructed nature of our context (cf. Kegan's utility here)
... it develops critical thinking (which also applies to religious community)
... it evokes emotional responses that can be used to tie biblical stories to people's lives
... it helps us sort out some of the reasons why religious community/spirituality is resisted by the hegemonic culture
... it's fun!
... it's a great connection to/for young people
... we can talk about media, thus moving out of the isolation and individuation of tv media, in particular, and towards a communal discussion/experience of it
... it helps to identify people's hungers, and what appears to pleasure them
... some few, but excellent pieces (like Dead Man Walking), can tell The Story better than anything we can do individually
- using popular culture from a media literacy frame in religious ed is difficult because:
... the epistemology required (social construction of knowledge) is at odds with church teaching in some communities
... pop culture seeks to create passivity, reception, rather than activity, reflection — media literacy fights this, but it's easy to be lulled back into it
... the pacing of pop culture is usually much faster, and draws people in rather than promotes contemplation
... using pop culture texts can evoke problems from institutional "authorities" for whom the "authority" of the text is perceived as counter their own teaching/authority

- ... without critical attention it promotes a “formation” that is at odds with the formation required for religious education
 - it supports individualism
 - it negates commitment to the common good
 - it trivializes or fails to adequately depict adult faith
 - it’s so much fun that it draws us away from economic critique and action
- ... it draws away from grounded, centered selves
- theological concepts evoked include: theological anthropology, justice issues, blasphemy, redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, Christology
 - ... blasphemy came up with Joan Osborne and Madonna
 - ... intimacy has been redefined through tv talk shows
 - ... justice came up in newscasts, in commercial episode, in Madonna
- in some sense we need to develop a concomitant “religious literacy” that can help us use language and image and music from our own traditions and contexts to ritually and theologically embody our new understandings
 - ... what is implicit religious authority and explicit religious authority?
 - ... what are implicit religious images and explicit religious images?
- the kit, in particular, is useful because:
 - ... it has great, practical, resources
 - ... it carries its own “authorization”
- the kit has problems because:
 - ... it insufficiently understands “action”
 - ... it insufficiently accepts the pleasure induced by the media
 - ... it is mostly critical, not constructive (for instance, we have ten media myths, but what about the ten ideas religious community offers us in contestation of the myths?)
 - ... it has nothing to deal with the Internet
 - ... it lacks resources for the economic/structural analysis piece
- things in general:
 - ... people loved the workshop!
 - ... people kept commenting on how diverse the group was
 - ... what we’re doing fulfills a vital need
 - ... what we’re doing is a crucial form of continuing ed
 - ... need to think more about the “embodiedness” issues
 - ... some people found the music pulling them away from their center or the workshop, and some people found it helpful and pulling them toward their center
- things I learned about myself as a teacher:
 - ... good at facilitation
 - ... talk too much
 - ... trust the process!
- questions that remain pressing for me:
 - ... what is a border community? and what does it mean in this context?

- ... what does news have to do with formation of soul, with formation in religious ed?
- ... how do we use popular culture to connect: with each other, with ourselves, with the church? it's easier to be connected to issues and people through film, than in person (remember my reactions after seeing *Dead Man Walking*) we can consume meaning through popular media, but is it as depth-full as religious meaning calls us to be?
- ... what are the specific issues of development of self in the midst of this culture that both media literacy and religious education speak to?
- ... what resources do these two very different arenas offer us?
 - (pop culture: emotionality, different choices to experiment with, bad themes)
 - (religious community: centrality of love, of relationality, need for space for quiet interiorization as well as social communal connections)
- ... how to make the shift from critical attention to cultural agency?